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# IED STAFF REPORT

CHINA'S COTTON AREA, YIELD, AND PRODUCTION  
BY PROVINCE: A PARTIAL DATA SET

RESEARCH NOTES ON CHINESE AGRICULTURE:  
NO. 1

Frederic M. Surls

International Economics Division • Economics and Statistics Service • USDA

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS DIVISION STAFF REPORT

October 1980

People's Republic of China Section  
Asia Branch, International Economics Division  
Economics and Statistics Service  
United States Department of Agriculture





CHINA'S COTTON AREA, YIELD, AND PRODUCTION BY PROVINCE: A PARTIAL DATA SET. Research Notes on Chinese Agriculture: No. 1, by Frederic M. Surls, PRC Section, Asia Branch, IED, ESS, USDA. October 1980.

### Abstract

A variety of Chinese sources were used to estimate China's cotton acreage and production by province for selected years from 1957 to 1980. Peculiarities of Chinese data sources and practices in reporting cotton area and production are briefly discussed. Sources for all estimates are presented.

Keywords: China, cotton, cotton production.

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### Introduction

A first step toward a more analytical approach to current situation analysis of China's cotton production is a set of area, yield, and production data by province. Such data permit more systematic evaluation of the impact of acreage changes and weather on current year crop production. Additionally, knowledge of trends and past changes in regional area, yield, and production are important in attempting to project the future growth of national production. The increased flow of provincial information over the past several years now makes it possible to assemble a preliminary set of provincial data for certain years, although gaps remain and a number of approximations and estimates are required.

This paper presents a partial data set of provincial cotton production for use in USDA and by other users. The paper also includes a brief description of the types of information used, Chinese terminology, and problems remaining in Chinese data on provincial cotton production. Sources for all data and assumptions used in estimating missing figures are presented in the appendix. The major concern of this paper is to make data available to users; no attempt was made to analyze and explain the regional trends and shifts suggested by the data.

The data presented here are for the years 1957, 1965, 1973, and 1977-80. The figures for earlier years are presented in order to give the user some idea of changes over time. Information is insufficient to attempt to fill in other years.



This report is the first of what is intended as a series of brief papers summarizing currently available information on various aspects of agriculture in the People's Republic of China.

Future reports are planned for total grain, wheat and summer harvested grains, rice, oilseeds, and livestock. The major objectives of this series are to compile and source data and other materials on topics of interest to analysts in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, other government agencies, and the private sector, and to get this information into the hands of users as quickly as possible.

In-depth research on these subjects will generally be disseminated through other channels. Comments, suggestions, and supplementary information from users will be appreciated.



### The Data

The data set presented here contains provincial area weights for 1957, 1965, 1973, 1978, and 1979 and production weights for 1957, 1978, and 1979 (table 1). Area and production data used in calculating these weights are presented in tables 2 and 3. Provincial yields calculated from the area and production data are given in table 4. Estimated provincial areas for nonreporting provinces were included in order to give a complete provincial breakdown for all years covered except 1977. For 1977, data were insufficient and only reported data are listed. A tentative breakdown of 1980 acreage is also included in table 2. Except for 1957, there is no official figure on total national cotton area.

Provincial production information is much less complete than area data. Therefore complete estimates of provincial production have been presented only for 1957, 1978, and 1979, although table 3 also includes available provincial production figures for both 1973 and 1977. The sum of provincial production estimates differs slightly from national production figures as reported by the State Statistical Bureau (SSB).

Data presented here are taken from Chinese radio broadcasts, newspapers and other publications, and from interviews with provincial agricultural officials. Provincial interviews by the Office of the Agricultural Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and by others became an increasingly important source of information over the last 2 years. These various sources have provided actual figures or, in some cases, sufficient related data to permit calculation of the desired figure (for example, production and yield data which can be used to calculate area or a percentage increase in production over a year whose production is known).





A basic assumption of this type of analysis is that the Chinese keep a consistent set of books and that their data are meaningful. However, reports differ in precision and reliability and in some cases conflict with one another. Where figures conflict, consistency with other data and judgment have been used in selecting the figure presented here. Given the variety of sources used, discrepancies are not surprising. There is frequently substantial rounding of numbers in Chinese sources and no standard rules of rounding appear to be observed. On occasion, outdated figures can be used in discussing area or production for a year in news accounts and figures can be confused and scrambled in these accounts. Errors are also introduced during the process of translation and publication of translations.

An additional source of inaccuracy in some cases is inability to distinguish between preliminary estimates, prepared before harvesting is completed, and final figures, which are not available until well into the year following harvest. For example, Henan province in December 1979 reported a 1979 crop area of 540,000 hectares and production of 205,000 tons. Six months later, the figure for area had risen by 2.8 percent above the December figure while the figure for production had declined by 3.4 percent. Where press and radio broadcasts were used, there was frequently no way to determine whether a figure was preliminary or final. Many of the provincial numbers for both 1978 and 1979 are likely preliminary since they are taken from broadcasts or newspapers around the end of the year.

These sources of error in area and production figures from reporting provinces were the major reason provincial production figures in table 3



were not forced to sum to the 1978 and 1979 national totals released by the SSB. Attempts to force production from nonreporting provinces to sum to the residual left by subtracting production in reporting provinces from the reported national total left an unrealistically small production for nonreporting provinces. Some of the reported provincial production figures are apparently too large but there is no way to determine where error lies. Consistency between national and provincial production data will not be achieved until the SSB releases the complete set of provincial data underlying the national total.



### Terminology

Chinese acreage data appears to be reported in terms of sown rather than harvested area; all area figures presented here are assumed to be sown acreage. This places Chinese acreage figures on a different basis than those of the United States, which normally reports acreage series on a harvested area basis. If statistical practices followed by the Chinese during the fifties are still in effect or have been recently reintroduced, harvested acreage data are also collected and yields are calculated on both a sown and harvested acreage basis. 1/ Some of the production and area figures which were derived using reported yields, may, therefore, be in error if the reported yields were based on harvested acreage.

Chinese cotton production figures are reported as simply "cotton" or in some cases as "ginned cotton" (pi mian). Where production is not identified as being on a ginned basis, figures appear to be ginned weight. Therefore all production figures are assumed to be in ginned weight. This is consistent with statistical practices in the fifties, the latest period for which a description of official statistical methodology is available. 2/

All numbers in this report were converted from Chinese to metric units. The Chinese unit of area is the mu (0.0667 hectare). Chinese cotton production figures are reported in either jin (0.5 kg.) or dan (0.05 ton).

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1/ Handbook of Agricultural Statistical Work (Statistical Publishing House, Peking, 1956) translated in Current Background, no. 434, January 15, 1957, pp. 15-16.

2/ Ibid., p. 17.





Table 1--Provincial cotton area and production weights,  
selected years 1/

Region and province:	Sown area					Production <u>2/</u>		
	1957	1965	1973	1978	1979	1957	1978	1979
	<u>Percent of total</u>							
Northern China:	62.6	57.2	53.1	51.3	50.7	59.8	34.2	33.2
Liaoning	3.4	2.6	2.7	2.1	.8	2.4	1.1	0.7
Shandong	13.5	14.1	12.2	11.1	11.6	11.1	7.1	7.2
Hebei	17.1	14.1	11.2	11.5	10.9	19.2	5.1	4.7
Beijing/Tianjin	NA	.3	.2	.5	.5	NA	.2	.2
Henan	15.2	11.3	12.2	11.6	12.1	11.0	9.4	8.9
Shanxi	5.9	5.5	5.3	5.4	5.2	6.1	3.6	3.2
Shaaxi	5.0	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.5	6.4	4.8	4.8
Gansu	.4	.5	.6	.6	.7	.5	.4	.4
Xinjiang	2.0	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.1	2.5	3.1
Central China:	36.4	41.4	45.7	47.4	48.2	39.8	65.1	66.2
Zhejiang	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.8	2.7	3.8	2.8
Jiangsu	11.8	11.5	11.8	12.2	12.8	11.7	21.7	23.8
Shanghai	.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.3	5.5	4.0
Anhui	3.5	4.2	6.8	7.0	7.0	3.0	5.4	4.3
Hubei	10.2	11.3	12.2	12.4	12.8	13.9	16.8	20.2
Hunan	1.4	3.0	3.8	3.9	3.7	1.3	3.5	4.2
Jiangxi	1.3	2.1	2.0	2.4	2.2	1.6	1.6	1.9
Sichuan	5.9	5.8	5.4	5.9	5.9	4.3	6.8	5.0
Others	1.0	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.1	.4	.7	.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NA = Not available.

1/ Calculated from area and production data in tables 2 and 3. Details may not add to total because of rounding.

2/ Complete provincial production figures for 1965 and 1973 are not available.



Table 2—Cotton area by province and region

Region and province	Sown area basis						
	1957	1965	1973	1977	1978	1979	1980
	1,000 hectares						
Northern China:	3,563	2,705	2,601	NA	2,454	2,323	2,443
Liaoning	195	123	<u>1/</u> 130	NA	100	35	40
Shandong	767	667	<u>1/</u> 600	NA	533	533	<u>1/</u> 620
Hebei	975	667	551	NA	550	500	527
Beijing/Tianjin	NA	13	10	NA	<u>1/</u> 25	<u>1/</u> 25	<u>1/</u> 25
Henan	867	533	600	NA	557	555	<u>1/</u> 530
Shanxi	333	260	<u>1/</u> 260	NA	260	<u>1/</u> 240	<u>1/</u> 247
Shaanxi	287	267	<u>1/</u> 267	267	252	<u>1/</u> 250	247
Gansu	25	23	<u>1/</u> 30	NA	<u>1/</u> 30	<u>1/</u> 30	<u>1/</u> 30
Xinjiang	114	152	153	NA	147	155	177
Central China:	2,070	1,960	2,240	NA	2,270	2,211	2,271
Zhejiang	75	80	<u>1/</u> 80	80	80	82	93
Jiangsu	671	546	580	585	<u>1/</u> 585	588	600
Shanghai	52	90	93	NA	95	95	101
Anhui	200	200	333	NA	<u>1/</u> 333	<u>1/</u> 320	<u>1/</u> 333
Hubei	583	533	600	600	593	587	589
Hunan	81	140	187	NA	189	168	168
Jiangxi	73	98	<u>1/</u> 100	NA	113	101	105
Sichuan	335	273	267	NA	282	<u>1/</u> 270	<u>1/</u> 282
Others <u>2/</u>	58	68	<u>1/</u> 60	NA	<u>1/</u> 60	<u>1/</u> 50	<u>1/</u> 40
Total, sum of provinces	5,691	4,733	4,901	NA	4,784	4,584	4,754
Total, USDA <u>3/</u>	5,776	4,770	4,850	4,700	4,700	4,500	4,700

NA = Not available and not estimated.

1/ Estimates.

2/ Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangdong, and Fujian.

3/ All national totals are estimates, with the exception of 1957. The totals given here are those of the current USDA series as reported in USDA, ESCS, People's Republic of China Agricultural Situation, Review of 1979 and Outlook for 1980, Supplement 6 to WAS-21, June 1980, p. 16. This series is well within the margin of error likely present in the provincial estimates.



Table 3--Cotton production by province and region

Region and province	Ginned weight basis				
	1957	1973	1977	1978	1979
	<u>1,000 tons</u>				
Northern China:	977	NA	NA	745	741
Liaoning	40	NA	15	23	15
Shandong	181	NA	149	154	160
Hebei	314	NA	NA	111	105
Beijing/Tianjin	NA	NA	NA	<u>1/</u> 5	<u>1/</u> 5
Henan	180	371	NA	205	198
Shanxi	99	NA	NA	<u>1/</u> 78	<u>1/</u> 72
Shaanxi	104	NA	100	105	107
Gansu	8	NA	NA	<u>1/</u> 9	<u>1/</u> 9
Xinjiang	51	59	49	55	70
Central China:	651	NA	NA	1,420	1,478
Zhejiang	44	NA	64	<u>1/</u> 83	<u>1/</u> 62
Jiangsu	191	445	380	474	532
Shanghai	22	87	64	120	90
Anhui	49	153	NA	<u>1/</u> 117	<u>1/</u> 96
Hubei	227	436	475	367	450
Hunan	22	75	NA	76	94
Jiangxi	26	NA	NA	35	43
Sichuan	70	NA	135	148	111
Others	7	NA	NA	<u>1/</u> 15	<u>1/</u> 12
Total, sum of provinces	1,635	NA	NA	2,180	2,231
Total, national figure <u>2/</u>	1,640	2,550	2,049	2,167	2,207

NA = Not available and not estimated.

1/ Estimated.

2/ As reported by Chinese sources and carried in the current USDA series (see source given in Table 2).





Table 4--Cotton yields by province and region 1/

Region and province	1957	1978	1979
	<u>Kg. per ha.</u>		
Northern China:	274	<u>3/</u> 304	319
Liaoning	205	230	429
Shandong	236	289	300
Hebei	322	202	210
Beijing/Tianjin	NA	<u>2/</u> 202	<u>2/</u> 210
Henan	208	368	357
Shanxi	297	<u>2/</u> 300	<u>2/</u> 300
Shaanxi	362	417	428
Gansu	320	<u>2/</u> 300	<u>2/</u> 300
Xinjiang	447	374	452
Central China:	314	<u>3/</u> 626	668
Zhejiang	587	1,038	756
Jiangsu	285	810	905
Shanghai	423	1,263	947
Anhui	245	<u>2/</u> 350	<u>2/</u> 300
Hubei	389	619	767
Hunan	272	402	560
Jiangxi	356	310	426
Sichuan	209	525	411
Others	121	<u>2/</u> 300	<u>2/</u> 300
National average:	287	456	487

1/ Calculated from area and production in tables 2 and 3. May differ slightly from yields reported in original sources because of rounding of production and area.

2/ Estimated or assumed.

3/ Yields in 1978 were reported to be 293 kg/ha for northern China and 623 kg/ha for central China (People's Daily, June 5, 1979, p. 2). The provincial breakdown used in this calculation may not correspond precisely with that used here.



Sources of Data

All 1957 data are taken from either Nai-ruenn Chen, Chinese Economic Statistics (Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago, 1967) or Committee on the Economy of China, Social Science Research Council, Provincial Agricultural Statistics for Communist China (Committee on the Economy of China, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1969).

Data for 1965 are taken from Agricultural Acreage in Communist China, 1949-68: A Statistical Compilation (August 1969) and from data and estimates provided by Agricultural Officer, U.S. Consulate General, Hong Kong, in cable HK 8037 (July 31, 1978), table 1.

The following abbreviations were used in sourcing material for 1973 and 1977-80:

- FB: Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Daily Report: People's Republic of China. National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Va. (A series of daily translations of Chinese radio broadcasts).
- JP Ag: U.S. Joint Publications Research Service. China Report: Agriculture. National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Va. (A series of translations of broadcasts, newspaper reports, and journal articles).
- P.O.: Interviews with provincial officials.
- RmRb: Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), Beijing, People's Republic of China. (China's major daily newspaper).
- SWB: Summary of World Broadcasts, The Far East Weekly Economic Report. British Broadcasting Corporation, Reading, England. (A weekly series of translations of radio broadcasts).



Area (Table 2)

Liaoning

1973: FB 4/24/79, p. L-6.  
1978: P.O., 6/79.  
1979: SWB No. 1041, 7/25/79, p. A-11.  
1980: JPRS Ag. no. 90, 7/14/80, p. 83.

Shandong

1973: Acreage ranging from 500-700,000 ha. can be calculated using conflicting production claims and the average northern China yield for 1973 of 428 hg/ha (RmRb 6/5/79, p. 2). The midpoint of these is used.  
1977: Planned area was 620,000 ha. FB 5/5/77, p. G-3. Actual area was likely substantially below this.  
1978: P.O., 11/79.  
1979: FB 4/29/80, p. L-8 and FB 5/2/80, p. 0-4.  
1980: Planned area was 620,000 ha. (FB 1/9/80, pp. 0-1 and 0-2). The plan is assumed to have been fulfilled.

Hebei

1973: FB 9/21/73, p. H-1.  
1978: FB 5/12/78, p. K-1.  
1979: P.O., 6/80, gave a range of 7-8 million mu. The midpoint is used.  
1980: P.O., 6/80.

Beijing/Tianjin

1973: Some decline in acreage from 1965 assumed.  
1978, 1979: Size of Tianjin municipality expanded in 1973. Reported Hebei acreage dropped by 17,000 ha. between 1973 and 1975. This is taken as a rough indication of acreage expansion in Tianjin.  
1980: Area assumed equal to that of 1979.

Henan

1973: FB 12/6/73, p. D-3.  
1978: Derived from production and the 1978 yield of 368 kg/ha reported by P.O., 12/79.  
1979: P.O., 6/80.  
1980: Planned acreage of 600,000 ha. was reported by P.O., 6/80, who also indicated that planting was far below plan. A slight decline is therefore assumed. This conflicts with some other reports.





Shanxi

1973: 1975 acreage reported in RmRb, 7/22/75, p. 3.  
1978: FB 5/17/78, p. K-2.  
1979, 1980: 1980 planned area is 247 t. ha. (FB 3/6/80, p. R-5.) This is assumed to be a small increase over 1979 area. The 1980 plan is assumed to have been met.

Shaanxi

1973: 1972 acreage reported in FB 5/24/72, p. H-10.  
1977: SWB No. 928, 5/11/77, p. A-6.  
1978: FB 4/2/79, p. T-1.  
1979: Planned area was 267 t. ha. (FB 4/29/79, p. T-1). Area actually sown assumed slightly below 1978.  
1980: JP Ag. No. 99, 9/3/80, p. 44.

Gansu

1973, 1978, 1979: Enlargement of the province around 1970 and reported increases in acreage and production in the early seventies suggest an increase over 1965 area.

Xinjiang

1973: FB 11/19/73, p. H-4.  
1978, 1979: FB 6/27/79, p. T-4.  
1980: JP Ag. No. 95, 8/8/80, p. 84.

Zhejiang

1973: Assumed equal to 1965 area.  
1977: FB 6/1/77, p. G-13.  
1978: FB 1/25/79, p. G-3.  
1979: FB 5/21/79, p. O-8.  
1980: FB 6/10/80, p. O-5.

Jiangsu

1973: FB 12/10/73, p. B-5.  
1977: FB 6/29/77, p. E-19.  
1978: Assumed equal to 1977 and 1979 area.  
1979: P.O., 7/80.  
1980: P.O., 7/80.



Shanghai

1957: Combined Jiangsu and Shanghai area was 723,000 ha. and Jiangsu area was 671,000 ha. The difference is assumed to be Shanghai area.  
1973: FB 1/2/74, p. B-19.  
1978: JP Ag. No. 19, 1/22/79, p. 18.  
1979: P.O., 7/80.  
1980: JP Ag. No. 90, 7/14/80, p. 83.

Anhui

1973: 1972 acreage. FB 9/28/72, p. C-2.  
1978: 1976 acreage. FB 5/12/76, p. G-9.  
1979: Planned acreage was 320,000 ha. and sown area was below that of 1978 (JP Ag. No. 44, 6/15/79, p. 44 and SWB No. 1057, 11/14/79, p. A-5). The plan is assumed to have been met.  
1980: Planned area increased but sowing was far behind 1979 schedule (FB 4/21/80, p. 01). Return to historical acreage assumed.

Hubei

1973: FB 6/11/73, p. B-6.  
1977: FB 6/29/77, p. E-19.  
1978: P.O., 7/79.  
1979: P.O., 7/79.  
1980: RmRb, 5/22/80, p. 1.

Hunan

1973: SWB No. 759, 1/23/74, p. A-8.  
1978: JP Ag. No. 48, 7/23/79, p. 49 and FB 3/25/80, p. P-6.  
1979: JP Ag. No. 48, 7/23/79, p. 49.  
1980: FB 6/5/80, p. P-8.

Jiangxi

1973: 1975 area, SWB No. 848, 10/15/75, p. A-5.  
1978: FB 5/25/78, p. G-8.  
1979: Derived from 1978 area, the increase in production, and the reported 40.3 percent increase in yield (RmRb, 12/1/79, p. 2).  
1980: JP Ag. No. 90, 7/14/80, p. 83.



Sichuan

- 1973: Mianhua Yumiao Yizai Jishu (Techniques for Trans-planting Cotton), Agricultural Publishing House, Beijing, 1975, p. 1.
- 1978: Calculated from 1978 production and the 1978 yield of 525 kg/ha reported by P.O., 9/79.
- 1979: Assumed. Cotton acreage was reported shifted to other crops by P.O., 9/79.
- 1980: Acreage assumed increased to 1978 level.

Others

- 1978-80: Ongoing decline in acreage assumed.



Production (Table 3)

Liaoning

1977: FB 11/22/78, p. L-6.  
1978: P.O., 6/79.  
1979: Calculated from area and the reported record yield of 435 kg/ha (SWB No. 1072, 3/5/80, p. A-13).

Shandong

1977-79: FB 12/19/79, p. 011.

Hebei

1978, 1979: Yields of 203 and 210 kg/ha for 1978 and 1979 (P.O., 6/80) applied to acreage figures.

Beijing/Tianjin

1978, 1979: Hebei yields applied to assumed area.

Henan

1973: Derived from 1965 area and 1965 yield (Beijing Review, 8/8/75, pp. 16-17) and the reported 144.2 percent increase in production between 1965 and 1973 (FB 5/30/74, p. H-2).  
1978: RmRb, 12/31/79, p. 1 and P.O., 12/79.  
1979: P.O., 6/80.

Shanxi

1978, 1979: Derived from area and an assumed yield of 300 kg/ha.

Shaanxi

1977, 1978: FB 4/2/79, p. T-1.  
1979: FB 12/28/79, p. T-2.

Gansu

1978, 1979: Derived from area and an assumed yield of 300 kg/ha.

Xinjiang

1973: FB 9/21/73, p. H-1 and SWB No. 756, 1/2/74, p. A-11.  
1977, 1978: FB 8/31/79, p. T-2.  
1979: RmRb, 1/6/80, p. 1.





Zhejiang

1977: FB 12/20/78, p. G-1.  
1978: Production can be approximated using area and an assumed yield. Yield was reported to be a record. The highest yield figure available for Zhejiang is that of 1968--1,035 kg/ha (FB 1/21/77, p. 7). This figure is used for 1978 yield.  
1979: Production dropped (RmRb 12/29/79, p. 1). The decline is assumed to be identical to that reported for Shanghai.

Jiangsu

1973: FB 10/15/74, p. G-3.  
1977, 1978: FB 5/25/79, p. 0-3.  
1979: RmRb, 12/14/79, p. 1, reports an increase of 40,000 tons or 8.7 percent. This figure is reported through early 1980. P.O., 7/80, gave a final figure of 531.5 thousand tons, an increase of 12.2 percent.

Shanghai

1973: Calculated from area and yield figures reported in SWB No. 759, 1/23/74, p. A-10.  
1977: FB 1/12/79, p. G-4.  
1978: Calculated from area and yield of 1.2675 kg/ha reported by P.O., 7/80.  
1979: Calculated from area and yield of 952.5 kg/ha reported by P.O., 7/80.

Anhui

1973: FB 12/12/73, p. C-1.  
1978, 1979: A substantial part of provincial cotton area is in the lower-yielding region north of the Huai River. Provincial yield is therefore substantially below the average for Central China. A 1978 yield of 350 kg/ha is assumed. Yield in 1979 is assumed to have dropped to 300 kg/ha because of poor weather.

Hubei

1973: Derived from 1974 production of 480,000 t. (P.O., 7/79) and 10 percent increase reported for 1973 over 1974 (SWB No. 814, 2/19/75, p. A-11).  
1977: FB 5/14/80, p. P-8.  
1978: P.O., 7/79.  
1979: FB 1/16/80, p. P-2.



Hunan

1973: FB 6/6/75, p. H-5 and SWB No. 810, 1/22/75, p. A-5.  
1978: FB 11/6/79, p. P-9.  
1979: FB 3/25/80, p. P-6.

Jiangxi

1978, 1979: RmRb 12/1/79, p. 2.

Sichuan

1977: FB 12/30/77, p. J-2.  
1978, 1979: FB 8/29/80, p. O-4.

Others

1978, 1979: 300 kg/ha yield assumed and applied to estimated area.







